

KinderUSA NEWS

KIDS IN NEED OF DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND RELIEF

THE GAZA CRISIS

Gaza Emergency Relief Project

December 2008 – January 2009

The Gaza Strip is recognized worldwide as synonymous with the extreme poverty and severely overcrowded living conditions that 1.5 million Palestinian women, children, and men endure there.

Often lost in the grim official statistics about Gaza is this one bright side: self-reliance remains a major feature of the local economy. Farming families comprise about 27 percent of the population. Gaza's farmers, fishermen, and herders, against formidable odds, provide food for the overwhelming majority of Palestinian families, according to the United Nations.¹

But when crisis and hardship hit, the delicate links across the economy shatter, and civilians pay the price. They suffer lost livelihoods, hunger, and homelessness.



With children, 56 percent of the population, being the most vulnerable in any conflict, the war in Gaza was no different. Gaza's Ministry of Health

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KinderUSA Response: Fast, Direct, and Effective

KinderUSA had the capacity to respond immediately to this catastrophic situation having had an active presence in Gaza since 2002, with an extensive network of contacts on the ground who are affiliated with small, local nongovernmental organizations. These NGOs, many of them led by women with intimate knowledge of their communities, know what is happening in real time and where the real needs are.

In the U.S. and in Gaza, KinderUSA staff and volunteers worked overtime to set everything in motion well before the anticipated ground offensive which began on January 3, 2009 insuring families in need were identified and that supplies were readily available.

The generous response to our

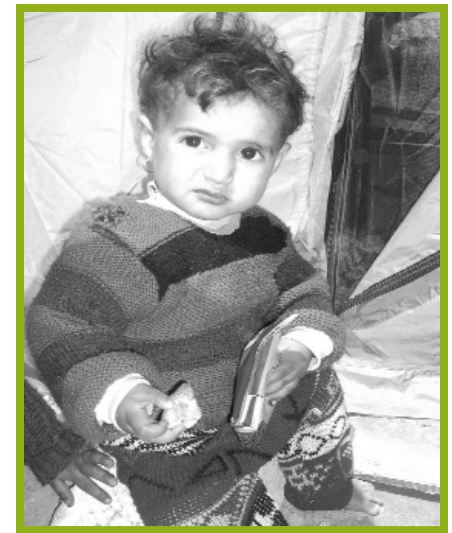


Emergency Relief Appeal from donors like you enabled us to distribute – quickly – food, medicine, and blankets to families most in need. Our goal was to reach the poorest of the poor...and, thanks to YOU, we did and continue to do so!



Direct Food Assistance to Needy Families

KinderUSA's Al Huda Bakery Project in Khan Younis in southern Gaza was a productive focal point throughout the conflict. Beginning on December 28, 2008, the bakery prepared and distributed bread and fresh-baked, classic fatayer (small pastry pies stuffed with spinach, cheese, and zaatar) to 2,000 families identified as most in need in nearby villages, including Abbasan, Khazaa, Bani Suheila, and Al Quarrara. Given large family sizes, over 16,000 people received this direct food assistance on a daily basis. The recipients included 1,100 families who were temporarily sheltered in schools.



fuel."

But the Khan Younis bakery was prepared. During the first two days of the conflict, anticipating correctly that it was the beginning of a major military operation, the bakery stocked up with enough supplies, including fuel, to keep it fully operational for a month.

Another advantage was that the bakery's workers – all of them women – live nearby, and were able to easily travel to and from home on foot, typically with their children in tow. This minimized the security risks for the staff and minimized absences from work due to the security situation.

**The need was
great.**

"Currently, only 20 bakeries are semi-operational in the whole of the Gaza Strip," KinderUSA's representative Khalil stated in a Project Update on January 4. "People are taking high risks to queue at the bakeries for long hours, and in most cases they leave after three or four hours without bread as bakeries are running out of flour, oil, water, and

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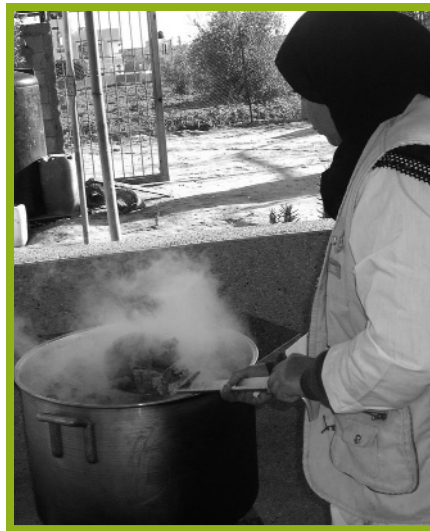
Direct Food Assistance to Needy Families

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Distribution of the bread and fatayer to families was low-tech. People used bicycles, donkey carts, or simply walked to the villages to reach needy families trapped in their homes. These modes of transportation were safer than riding in automobiles or other closed vehicles.

As the conflict intensified, many families fled with over 2000 people settling at the bakery for shelter. The team began to prepare full meals for these families by going to the local market during the 'humanitarian cease fires' buying whatever they could and cooking on a very antiquated propane flame.

As the violence continued, many of the families in the bakery shelter assisted our women with



the preparation in a common feeling of community.

The families were fed during the conflict and well into February for a total cost of \$50,000 in flour and bakery supplies, and another \$10,000 for meat, vegetables, and cooking supplies.

In the second phase, KinderUSA continued the direct food assistance to the families in Khan Younis villages, and expanded our efforts by providing \$25,000 worth of food parcels to another 350 families in the Azzbet Abd Rabbo camp. Finally, we continued through the conflict our needy pregnant women project by infusing another \$15,000 into the program. Many of these women were without any nutrition during the violence while new mothers struggled to feed their infants, unable to lactate due from both lack of nutrition and stress from the war.

Blankets: Basic Protection for Kids

Most of the conflict took place in January, the coldest month in Gaza, when average temperatures range between 43°F and 59°F (6°C to 15°C) and night-time temperatures plummet even lower. The weather, coupled with the widespread destruction that uprooted families and forced them to seek temporary shelter, created an urgent need for blankets. Families huddled together to keep warm in shelters and homes where windows were blown out, exposed to the elements.

In consultation with UNRWA representatives in Jerusalem, KinderUSA responded to the need of blankets. Wiring \$12,000



for the purchase of 2,000 blankets, UNRWA distributed to displaced children living in its shelters in Gaza.

Closed Banks, KinderUSA Connection Key

For local initiatives in Gaza such as the Al Huda Bakery Project, links with respected, responsible organizations in the U.S. such as KinderUSA make a huge difference.

All banks in Gaza closed when the conflict erupted in December 2008. Al Huda pays its creditors by bank check, not cash. With banks closed, suppliers continued to accept Al Huda's checks, even though they were not able to cash them. "They knew that the checks were good, and that the money came from KinderUSA," reported our representative Mahdia on January 4. "So the checks were respected and considered as cash. The only condition for Al Huda to work on credit is that suppliers know the funds are guaranteed by KinderUSA and will be available the minute banks again open for business." Your generous donations throughout the conflict insured the lifeline for all these innocent children was not disrupted.

Gaza Emergency Relief Project

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reported 404 children lost their lives in this conflict while another 1,872 children were injured.

The 22-day conflict also wreaked widespread havoc for innocent civilians:

Tens of thousands of families were rendered homeless as residential neighborhoods were systematically devastated. Over 14,000 homes were totally or partially destroyed, the United Nations Development Program reported.

Hospitals and health services were overwhelmed by the large number of injured.

“Even before the conflict began, there were severe shortages of pharmaceuticals, consumables, spare parts and equipment. More than 100 essential medicines and more than 230 consumables were out of stock,” reported the WHO.¹

Water, food, and cooking gas were in short supply.

Electricity and sanitation services collapsed, and open sewage filled the streets.



The agricultural sector “suffered tremendous damage, with much of the agricultural infrastructure shattered, threatening the food security of Gazan residents,” the UNDP stated on February 9, 2009.

Further, there was “widespread razing” of cultivated lands as well as the destruction of greenhouses, livestock and poultry farms, registered groundwater wells, and irrigation networks.²

This exacerbated an already difficult situation. “Since closure was imposed in June 2007, followed by restrictions on exports . . . agricultural production has continued to decline. Farmers have typically seen their income cut by half,” the International Committee of the Red Cross noted on February 26.³

¹ World Health Organization, “The health situation in the Gaza Strip, Report by the Secretariat,” Executive Board, EB124/35, 124th Session, 20 January 2009, Agenda item 4.16.

² UNDP, “Gazans Cite Psychological Toll, Unemployment as Major Concerns, According to a UNDP Survey,” Press Release, February 9, 2009.

³ ICRC, “Gaza: the struggle to pick up the pieces,” Operational Update, February 26, 2009.

Building Blocks for Self-Sufficiency

KinderUSA’s philosophy is grounded in a grass-roots approach to problem-solving that emphasizes what is practical, efficient, and sustainable meeting the needs of as many children as possible.

Our efforts during the recent conflict in Gaza illustrate why this works, and we are grateful for your support without which, our work would be impossible.

As we continue to develop the Bakery Project – whose products were so valuable to needy Palestinian families at a time of heightened crisis – we hope to re-establish broken economic links of impoverished farmers in Gaza by providing them with seeds today for our Ramadan program. It’s a low-cost model for community self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

This successfully proven project brings fresh produce to our neediest beneficiaries while sustaining impoverished farmers providing the hope so desperately needed at a time of extreme exasperation.

It is only through your generosity that this important program continues to be a success each year! Please use the enclosed envelope to send a donation for the Ramadan Farmers Project, or make an online donation at

www.kinderusa.org and choose Ramadan from the drop down menu.

Childhood moves forward across the globe, yet unfortunately for many of our children in the Kinder USA family of beneficiaries, their childhood is under threat. We all have a shared sense of responsibility for these innocent beings therefore our work has never been more important.

Going Green!

*We don't inherit the planet
from our parents; we borrow it
from our children*

~ Common Indigenous Proverb

Kinder USA is doing its part to leave a sustainable planet for our children by transitioning to paperless for our donors who prefer to receive their monthly receipts electronically. For donors who wish to receive a green receipt, please notify Kinder USA via email at inder@kinderusa.org. We do recognize that many of our donors prefer a paper receipt therefore you will continue to receive a hard copy as in the past. Thank you for your continued support!



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SPECIAL EDITION

